Cost of CNG Conversion Kit

861. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that CNG is a safe, clean, burning and environment friendly fuel. and toxic emissions such as lead and sulphur are completely eliminated and the existing petrol vehicle can use CNG by fitting a conversion kit;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the average cost of converting a petrol car to CNG is about Rs. 35,000, and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to introduce subsidy for the capital expenditure of Rs. 35,000 for installation of kit for the first time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

Curbing of Import of Petroleum Products

862. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India imports seventy per cent of its requirement of crude oil from abroad and only thirty per cent are met from indigenous sources;

(b) whether it is also a fact that we spend Rs. 35,000 crore in foreign exchange every year for importing petroleum products as average energy sorted is around 7.11 per cent; and

(c) if so, the details of Government plan to curb the import of petroleum products and also on reduction on subsidy on these products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) As against crude oil requirement of 65.18 million tonnes (MMT) in 1997-98 and 68.54 MMT in 1998-99, the

import of crude oil was 34.494 MMT and 39.808 MMT during 1997-98 and 1998-99 respectively. The import of crude oil is likely to be 63.94 MMT as against the requirement of 91.44 MMT during 1999-2000.

(b) The value of crude oil and petroleum products imported during last three years has been as under:—

(Rs. crores)

1996-97	34171.68
1997-98	28329.07
1998-99	24712.98*

*Provisional

(c) Refining sector has been de-licensed. India has become near self-sufficient in refining capacity. The import of petroleum products has decreased substantially. The Government had decided in November, 1997 that subsidy on Liquid Petroleum Gas (Domestic) and Kerosene (Public Distribution System) will be reduced in phases to reach the level of 15% and 33.33% of the import parity price by 2000-01 and 2001-02 respectively. The subsidy wil be transferred to the fiscal budget from the year 2002 onwards. The ex-storage point price of high speed diesel is now being fixed on import parity basis.

Grant of Soft Loan to BLFC Ltd.

863. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Balmer Lawrie Freight Containers Ltd. (BLFC), a subsidiary of Balmer Lawrie and Co. Ltd., has reported itself to be potentially sick;

(b) if so, the measures taken by Government to nurse the Company back to normal; and

(c) what is Government's response to the request of the Company for grant of Rs. 45 crore soft loan by the Oil Industries Development Board?